

City Council Meeting Minutes

**July 23, 2020
Electronic Meeting
11:00 AM**

Call to Order – Mayor Stolzmann called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. **Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

City Council: ***Mayor Ashley Stolzmann
Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Maloney
Councilmember Kyle Brown
Councilmember J. Caleb Dickinson
Councilmember Deborah Fahey
Councilmember Chris Leh
Councilmember Jeff Lipton***

Staff Present: ***Heather Balser, City Manager
Megan Davis, Deputy City Manager
Kevin Watson, Finance Director
Nathan Mosely, Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Director
Kurt Kowar, Public Works Director
Rob Zuccaro, Planning & Building Safety Director
Chris Neves, Information Technology Director
Sharon Nemechek, Library Director
Dave Hayes, Police Chief
Megan Pierce, Economic Vitality Director
Kathleen Hix, Human Resources Director
Emily Hogan, Assistant City Manager for Communications
& Special Projects
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk***

Mayor Stolzmann noted that because of the COVID-19 emergency the meeting is being held electronically. She gave information on how the meeting process will work and directions for those dialing in on how to participate when it is time for public comments.

BUDGET RETREAT: DISCUSSION/DIRECTION/ACTION 2021-2022 BIENNIAL BUDGET

Mayor Stolzmann noted this is the first step in a long budget process and nothing is final until the final budget is approved. This is a chance to give direction to staff on these early proposals. There will be many other chances for public participation in this process.

2021-2022 BIENNIAL BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

Director Watson stated the Council is being asked to review and provide feedback on this process. This process has been amended somewhat due to impacts from COVID. The capital budget requests are handled separately from the operational part. City Manager has reviewed all of the capital requests and those will be presented later in the meeting. She will meet with each department head to review operational requests before those are presented to Council as well.

The Council is not being asked to approve the six-year capital plan today but is being asked to give feedback on the items before the final proposal is put together. The City Manager will present her final recommended budget in September. Council will have multiple meetings in the fall to determine a final budget that will be adopted in November.

Financial Policies

Director Watson noted the financial policies were adopted in 1984 with significant changes in 2015 and again last year. Staff has no recommended changes this year; they are included only for review and guidance.

Public Comments – None.

2021-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP)

Director Watson reviewed the latest revenue data and projections by fund. He noted the projections show significant decreases in most revenue areas.

Councilmember Lipton noted the revenue numbers for the Rec Center were projected prior to reopening and should be considered very soft at this point. This may impact the transfer from the General Fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Maloney agreed these numbers are from the beginning of June and may change.

Mayor Stolzmann stated the review of CIP projects will take place by fund. She suggested the water fund items be handled by the Utility Committee so Council does not need to review them today.

City Manager Balser noted the CIP that as presented is based on what we can fund this year and still keep \$1M in the CIP fund for emergencies. The focus this year is on the maintenance and preservation of current assets and strategic investments; there are not a lot of new projects.

Public Comments – None.

Members reviewed the CIP projects by fund beginning with 2020 projects.

Members agreed to move the BMX project to 2024.

Mayor Pro Tem Maloney stated he would like to see more funding and a more comprehensive approach to trail maintenance as people are now using the trail system at a much higher rate during the pandemic.

Councilmember Lipton agreed noting there is money in the Open Space & Parks Fund reserves that could be used; he thinks this should be prioritized. He would like to see a plan to address additional trail maintenance using both capital and operating funds.

Staff will bring back more information and options for trail funding for the next budget discussion.

Councilmember Fahey asked that all projects be reviewed specifically to look for ways to be more environmental and sustainable.

Mayor Stolzmann suggested replacing the playground at Cottonwood Park now with the current lottery funds as a short term measure for that area as we cannot afford a full master planning process right now. Members agreed to add this to the list for playground upgrades for further consideration.

Members discussed some ideas for how to fund renewal and replacement for the athletic fields. The Finance Committee will make a recommendation to Council.

Councilmember Dickinson encouraged moving the middle mile options for free Wi-Fi in public places to earlier in the six years to help students who are now using online learning. Members agreed this should be considered to move earlier.

Mayor Stolzmann asked if alternatives have been considered for Taser replacement for the police department. Chief Hayes stated the department is looking at alternatives.

Councilmember Dickinson suggested solar be included on any new carports.
Councilmember Fahey agreed.

Members discussed the funding for the Transportation Master Plan, the pavement management projects, and the timing of some of those projects.

Members discussed if the Utility Fund should cover any costs of street repairs that are needed when completing utility projects.

Members encouraged staff to look into what options there might be to move to a fully electric fleet over the next few years.

Members were asked if they have any projects they would like considered that were not included in the proposal.

Councilmember Fahey asked that freeze proof water fountains at John Breaux Park be included.

Councilmember Lipton asked that the open space signs that are no longer readable be replaced; he would also like additional small directional signs. He asked for easy affordable signs, not elaborate ones. Members will bring something back for consideration.

Mayor Stolzmann asked for an evaluation of solar panels added to the Rec Center compared to our WindSource project. Councilmember Lipton would prefer using the solar garden option. City Manager Balser stated this may require more time than is available for this budget cycle but staff will look at options.

Members discussed if there might be funding for a one-time payment for Renewable Energy Credits to move the City towards all renewable energy as there was not time to get this on the ballot this year as we did not have enough information. Members were very supportive of the concept but feel they need more information to do it well and properly fund it. Staff will bring more information and options for the next budget discussion.

Councilmember Dickinson stated he would like the Council to consider infrastructure improvements to the area around the Steinbaugh Pavilion and Front Street. Staff will look for a place for this in the six-year plan.

City Manager Balser noted that many items were added or moved earlier in the program during this conversation so that will require staff to move other things around or remove things to make that happen.

ADJOURN

Members adjourned at 2:34 pm.

Ashley Stolzmann, Mayor

Meredyth Muth, City Clerk

